STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES

FEB. NO. 9

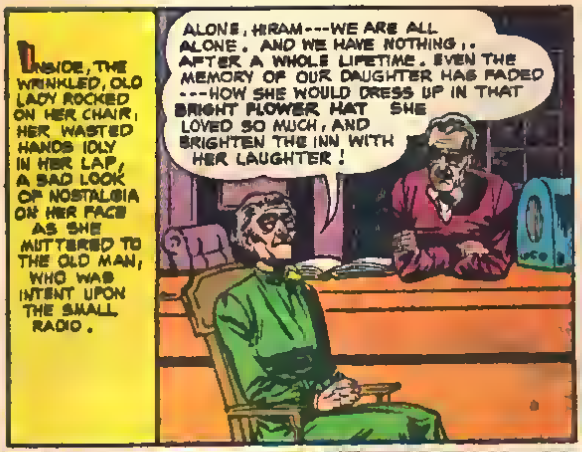
10¢

...to turn the cover of

is to pry loose the lid of musty coffins and unleash eerie and terrible beings beyond all imagination!

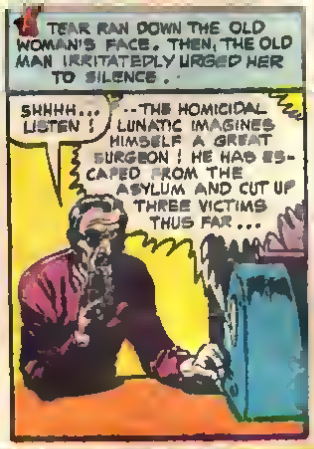
10¢ ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND 10¢

STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES Feb. 1953 Vol. 1, No. 5, is published bi-monthly by Fawcett Publications, Inc., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Entered as second class matter March 5, 1952 at the post office Greenwich, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Louisville Ky.
Copyright 1952 by Fawcett Publications, Inc. Trademark of Fawcett Publications, Inc.
Editorial and advertising offices 67 W. 44th St., N. Y. 18, N. Y. Send remittances and letters concerning subscriptions, change of address etc., to Circulation Dept., Fawcett Pl. Greenwich, Conn. Subscription rate 12 issues for $1.20 in U. S., possessions and Canada. Foreign, $1.70 in international money order, U. S. funds. Printed in U. S. A.

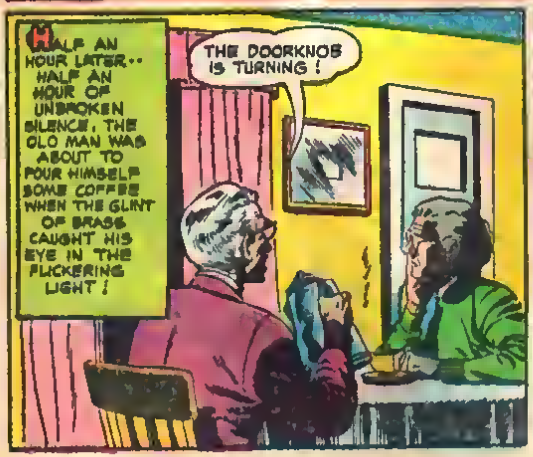

INSIDE, THE WRINKLED, OLD LADY ROCKED ON HER CHAIR; HER WASTED HANDS IDLY IN HER LAP; A SAD LOOK OF NOSTALGIA ON HER FACE AS SHE MUTTERED TO THE OLD MAN, WHO WAS INTENT UPON THE SMALL RADIO.
ALONE, HIRAM---WE ARE ALL ALONE. AND WE HAVE NOTHING.. AFTER A WHOLE LIFETIME. EVEN THE MEMORY OF OUR DAUGHTER HAS FADED ---HOW SHE WOULD DRESS UP IN THAT BRIGHT FLOWER HAT SHE LOVED SO MUCH, AND BRIGHTEN THE INN WITH HER LAUGHTER!

HOW MUCH WE LOVED HER---AS IF SHE WERE OUR VERY OWN! IT DIDN'T MATTER WHO SHE WAS---OR WHERE SHE CAME FROM IN THAT SNOWY NIGHT SHE FOUND HER WAY HERE!

THEN LIKE A CURSE---SHE WAS TAKEN FROM US THE SAME WAY! ON THE EVENING OF THE GREAT SNOWFALL WHEN SHE LEFT FOR THE DANCE IN TOWN...LOST IN THE STORM! LOST TO US FOREVER!


A TEAR RAN DOWN THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE. THEN, THE OLD MAN IRRITATEDLY URGED HER TO SILENCE.
SHHHH... LISTEN!
--THE HOMICIDAL LUNATIC IMAGINES HIMSELF A GREAT SURGEON! HE HAS ESCAPED FROM THE ASYLUM AND CUT UP THREE VICTIMS THUS FAR...

...LAST SEEN IN THE AREA OF CONDENAIR. BE ON THE LOOKOUT!
CONDENAIR! THAT IS ONLY THIRTY MILES NORTH!


HALF AN HOUR LATER.. HALF AN HOUR OF UNBROKEN SILENCE. THE OLD MAN WAS ABOUT TO POUR HIMSELF SOME COFFEE WHEN THE GLINT OF BRASS CAUGHT HIS EYE IN THE FLICKERING LIGHT!
THE DOORKNOB IS TURNING!

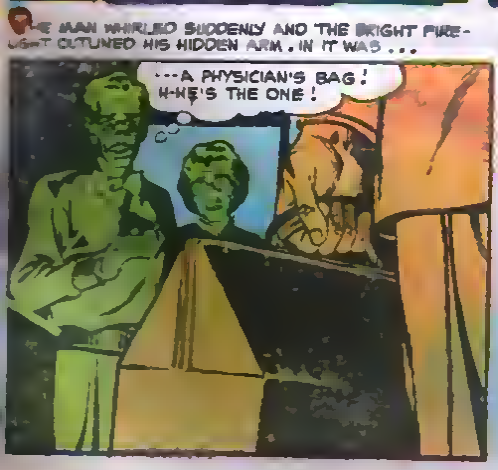
THE WEAPON IN THE BACKROOM! I'LL GET IT!

A SHUDDER RAN DOWN HIS BACK AND HE TOOK ONLY A SINGLE HASTY STEP BEFORE THE DOOR WAS THRUST OPEN COMPLETELY! THE OLD MAN WAS FROZEN TO THE SPOT!
OHHHH!

THE MAN IN THE DOORWAY WAS THIN, CADAVEROUSLY SO ---- AND HIS DEEP BLACK EYES BURNED WITH A TERRIFYING INTENSITY.
HE TOOK IN THE ROOM AT A GLANCE AND ADVANCED ACROSS THE THRESHOLD.
ANYONE ELSE HERE BESIDE YOU AND THE OLD MAN?
N--NO!

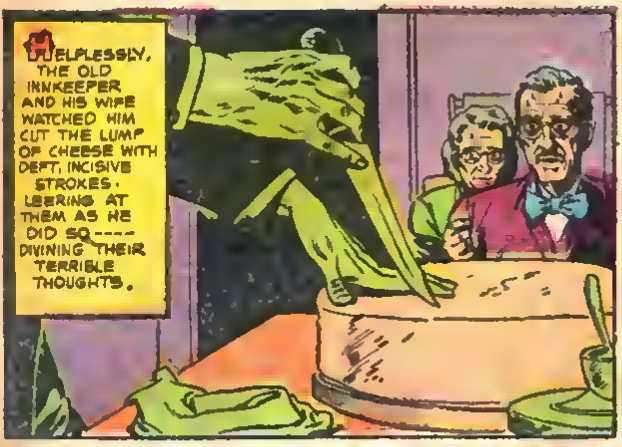
GOOD! GOOD! IT IS QUIET AND DESOLATE HERE.... IT PLEASES ME.

T-THERE IS SOMETHING IN HIS HAND! WHAT IS IT?

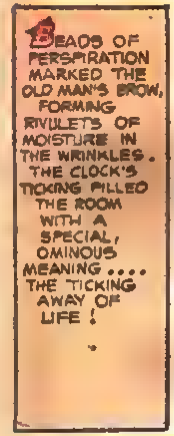

THE MAN WHIRLED SUDDENLY AND THE BRIGHT FIRELIGHT GLITTERED HIS HIDDEN ARM. IN IT WAS ...
---A PHYSICIAN'S BAG! H-HE'S THE ONE!

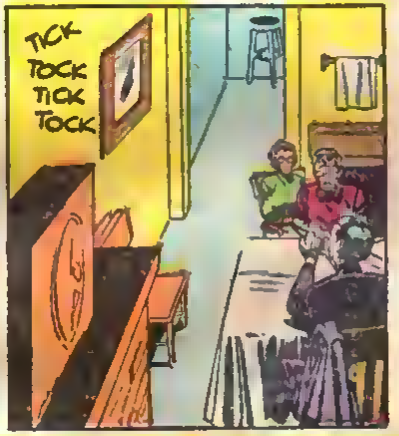
DO NOT STARE AT ME LIKE SIMPLETONS, FEEBLE ONES! FIX ME A ROOM --- MAKE ME SOME FOOD!

THE OLD LADY WENT TO SET SOME THINGS BEFORE HIM ON THE TABLE AND THE OLD MAN DODGED AWAY FOR THE BACK ROOM.
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO GET AT THE WEAPON!
UHH! STUCK! GOT TO OPEN IT---- QUICKLY! THERE!
SUDDENLY, A SHADOW FELL ACROSS HIM! IN THE DOORWAY STOOD THE MAN WITH THE DARK, GLOWERING EYES!
OH, NO!
AHH---I AM A GREAT ADMIRER OF KNIVES! YOU SEE, I AM A GREAT SURGEON!
I--I WAS ONLY LOOKING FOR A FRESH BEDSHEET IN THE DRAWER TO REMAKE THE BED!
YES---I AM CERTAIN YOU WERE! NOW YOU MAY CONTINUE---TO READY THE ROOM---. DO IT WELL---FOR NEVER HAVE YOU HAD SO ILLUSTRIOUS A GUEST!
MOMENTS LATER, THE OLD MAN RETURNED TO THE KITCHEN. HE WAS NEAR TO DISTRACTION IN THIS DILEMMA. THE MADMAN CONSUMED THE FOOD SET BEFORE HIM.
THE PHONE! HE IS SITTING WHERE HE CAN SEE IT! I CANNOT CALL TO INFORM THE AUTHORITIES IN TOWN! WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT CAN I DO?


HELPLESSLY, THE OLD INNKEEPER AND HIS WIFE WATCHED HIM CUT THE LUMP OF CHEESE WITH DEFT, INCISIVE STROKES, LEERING AT THEM AS HE DID SO---- DIVINING THEIR TERRIBLE THOUGHTS.

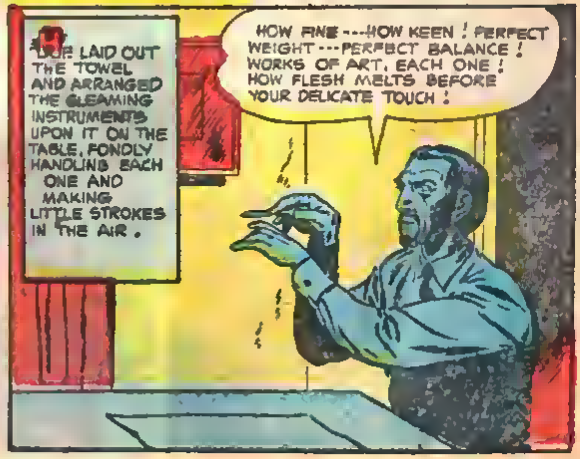
IT IS AS IF HE WERE CUTTING ---FLESH !


BEADS OF PERSPIRATION MARKED THE OLD MAN'S BROW, FORMING RIVULETS OF MOISTURE IN THE WRINKLES. THE CLOCK'S TICKING FILLED THE ROOM WITH A SPECIAL, OMINOUS MEANING.... THE TICKING AWAY OF LIFE !

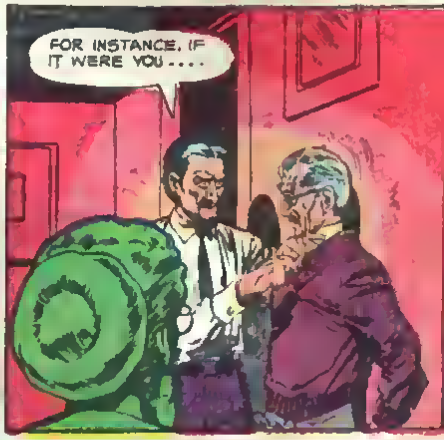

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK

GIVE ME A CLEAN TOWEL, OLD WOMAN !

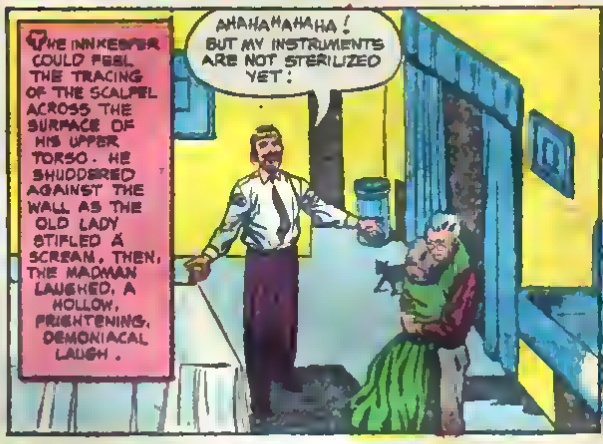
NOW BOIL SOME WATER IN THAT VAT !

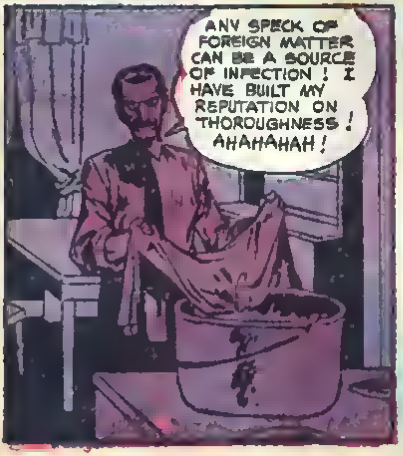

HE LAID OUT THE TOWEL AND ARRANGED THE GLEAMING INSTRUMENTS UPON IT ON THE TABLE, FONDLY HANDLING EACH ONE AND MAKING LITTLE STROKES IN THE AIR.
HOW FINE---HOW KEEN ! PERFECT WEIGHT---PERFECT BALANCE ! WORKS OF ART, EACH ONE ! HOW FLESH MELTS BEFORE YOUR DELICATE TOUCH !

BEFORE MY OPERATIONS, I MAKE AN ACCURATE CHART OF MY PATIENT, TRACING THE AREA OF WHERE I AM TO CUT!


FOR INSTANCE, IF IT WERE YOU....

NO---OH, NO!

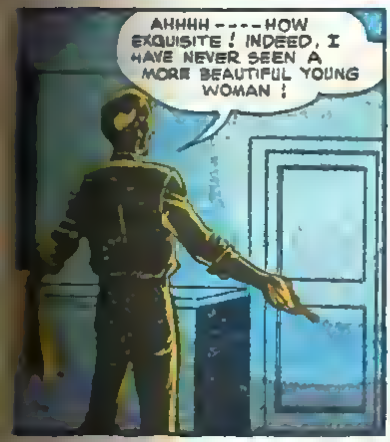

THE INNKEEPER COULD FEEL THE TRACING OF THE SCALPEL ACROSS THE SURFACE OF HIS UPPER TORSO. HE SHUDDERED AGAINST THE WALL AS THE OLD LADY STIFLED A SCREAM, THEN, THE MADMAN LAUGHED, A HOLLOW, FRIGHTENING, DEMONIACAL LAUGH.
AHAHAHAHAHA! BUT MY INSTRUMENTS ARE NOT STERILIZED YET!


ANY SPECK OF FOREIGN MATTER CAN BE A SOURCE OF INFECTION! I HAVE BUILT MY REPUTATION ON THOROUGHNESS! AHAHAHAH!

SIT NOW---AND BE SILENT! LET NO WORD, NO SIGN--- NO SOUND CROSS YOUR LIPS!

AHH... SEE HOW THEY GLEAM! SEE HOW THEY GLISTEN IN THE LIGHT! THEY ARE READY!

A STEP BEHIND ME! WHO IS THAT?


AHHHH----HOW EXQUISITE! INDEED, I HAVE NEVER SEEN A MORE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN!

B-BUT THERE IS NO ONE THERE!

MRROWRR

THE CREATURE HAS FALLEN DEAD!

THEY WERE TERRIFIED BUT THE MADMAN CONTINUED HIS ANIMATED CONVERSATION WITH THE UNSEEN PRESENCE. THEN, THROUGH INCREDULOUS EYES THE OLD FOLKS SAW ---
YOU WISH TO BE ALONE WHERE WE CAN CONVERSE? COME, LOVELY LADY----WE WILL FIND A PLACE!
THE SITTING ROOM SEEMS APPROPRIATE, FAIR ONE!
NOW I CAN USE THE PHONE!
THE OLD MAN SWALLOWED HARD, GRIPPED THE RECEIVER. HE WAITED---NO SOUND! THEN HE KNEW!
THE LINE IS DEAD! HE'S CUT THE WIRE!
WE MUST ESCAPE! QUICKLY, PUT ON YOUR COAT!
NOT A SOUND...JOHN! DON'T MAKE A SOUND!
SHHHHH.... HE'LL HEAR YOU!
COME---HOLD MY ARM SO YOU WILL NOT SLIP! THE WINDS ARE FIERCE! THE DRIFTS ARE DEEP!

OH, JOHN---
I-I CANNOT!
I CANNOT!

IT IS NO USE! I AM BLINDED---DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN! WE WILL FREEZE TO DEATH! WE MUST RETURN TO THE INN AND PRAY FOR THE BEST!
WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND IT NOW! THE SNOW IS BLINDING!

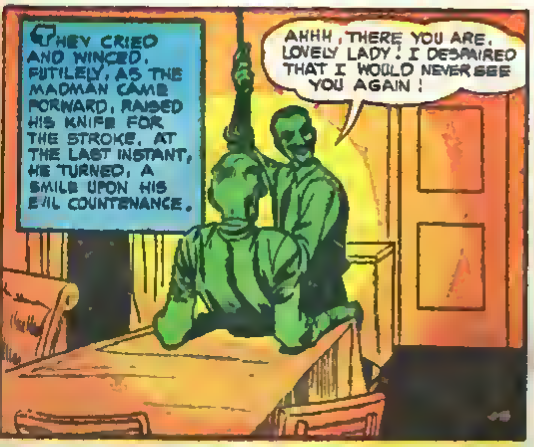
BUT SOMETHING CRUNCHED TOWARD THEM, PADDING DOWN THE NEW-FALLEN DRIFTS! THEY GASPED IN THE REALIZATION!
FOOTSTEPS! AND NO EARTHLY FORM!
OHHHHH...

TRAPPED! WE ARE TRAPPED!
BUT THE STEPS PAUSE--- AS THOUGH THEY WISH US NO HARM!

THE FOOTSTEPS ARE LEADING US BACK TO THE INN!

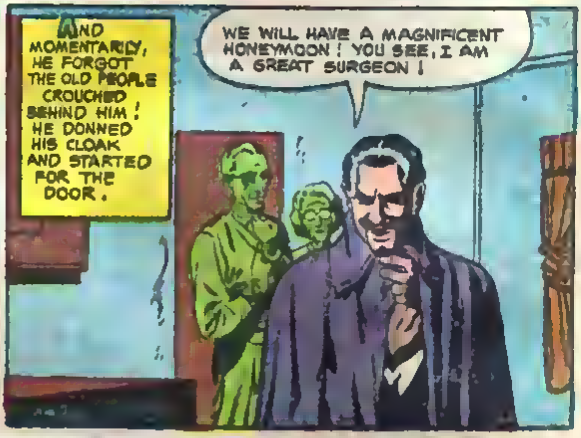
THE MADMAN WAS STANDING BESIDE THE INSTRUMENTS ON THE TABLE. HE WHIRLED ANGRILY AT THE SIGHT OF THEM, AND-
WHERE DID SHE GO? DID YOU TWO TURN HER AGAINST ME? YOU DID--I KNOW YOU DID!

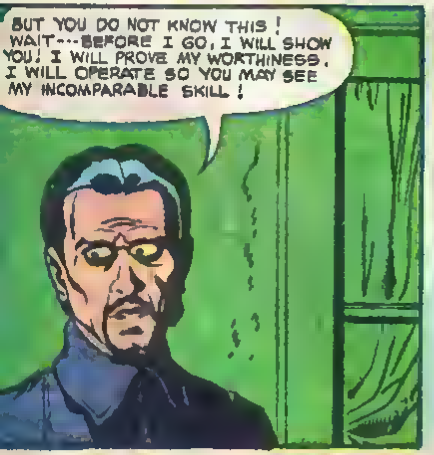
I'LL PUT AN END TO THAT! I'LL OPERATE--NOW!
NO--NO!


THEY CRIED AND WINCED, FUTILELY, AS THE MADMAN CAME FORWARD, RAISED HIS KNIFE FOR THE STROKE. AT THE LAST INSTANT, HE TURNED, A SMILE UPON HIS EVIL COUNTENANCE.
AHHH, THERE YOU ARE, LOVELY LADY! I DESPAIRED THAT I WOULD NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!

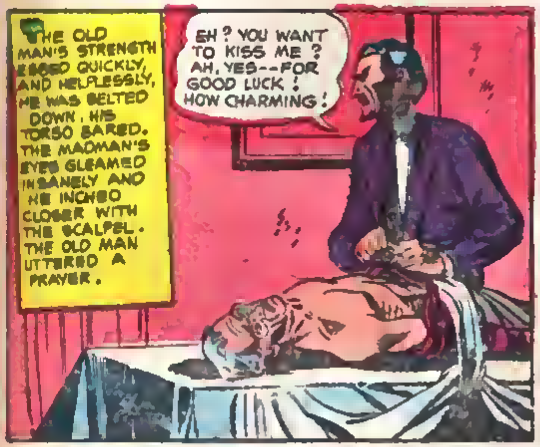
WHAT IS THAT? YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ACCEPT MY PROPOSAL? YOU WILL MARRY ME! AHHHH--- WONDERFUL!

BUT YOU WANT US TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY? YOU ARE IMPATIENT, EVEN AS I!


AND MOMENTARILY, HE FORGOT THE OLD PEOPLE CROUCHED BEHIND HIM! HE DONNED HIS CLOAK AND STARTED FOR THE DOOR.
WE WILL HAVE A MAGNIFICENT HONEYMOON! YOU SEE, I AM A GREAT SURGEON!

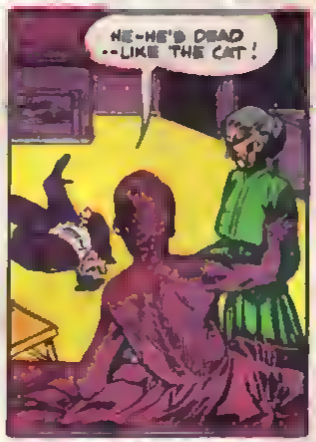

BUT YOU DO NOT KNOW THIS! WAIT---BEFORE I GO, I WILL SHOW YOU! I WILL PROVE MY WORTHINESS. I WILL OPERATE SO YOU MAY SEE MY INCOMPARABLE SKILL!

DOWN, YOU FOOL! YOU SHOULD BE HONORED AT THIS GREAT DIS-TINCTION!
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!


THE OLD MAN'S STRENGTH EBBED QUICKLY, AND HELPLESSLY, HE WAS BELTED DOWN. HIS TORSO BARED. THE MADMAN'S EYES GLEAMED INSANELY AND HE INCHED CLOSER WITH THE SCALPEL. THE OLD MAN UTTERED A PRAYER.
EH? YOU WANT TO KISS ME? AH, YES--FOR GOOD LUCK! HOW CHARMING!

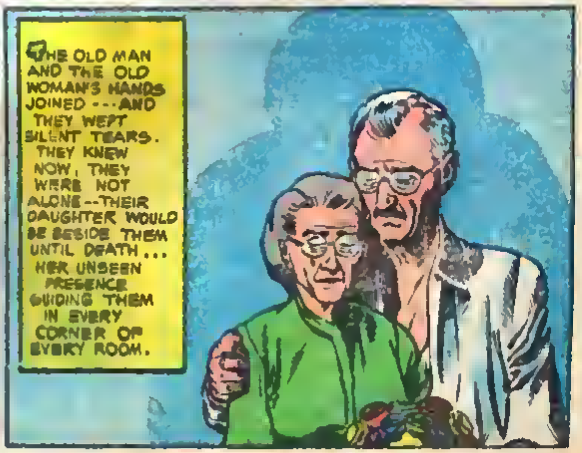
I----ARRGGG!

A SCREAM, TERRIFYING, UNHOLY, TORE FROM HIS LIPS AND HE STIFFENED SUDDENLY. THEN HIS BODY STRUCK THE FLOOR LIKE A STONE!


HE-HE'S DEAD --LIKE THE CAT!

WE TRACED THE LUNATIC HERE. ARE WE LATE?
THERE HE IS!

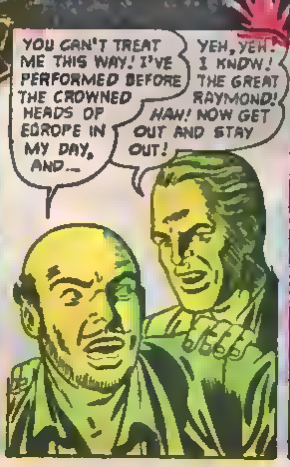
HE'S FINISHED. BUT WHAT'S THIS --THE IMPRINT OF A WOMAN'S KISS UPON HIS FACE, AND IN HIS HAND ----A LITTLE FLOWERED HAT!
OUR DAUGHTER'S FAVORITE HAT!


THE OLD MAN AND THE OLD WOMAN'S HANDS JOINED ---AND THEY WEPT SILENT TEARS. THEY KNEW NOW, THEY WERE NOT ALONE--THEIR DAUGHTER WOULD BE BESIDE THEM UNTIL DEATH... HER UNSEEN PRESENCE GUIDING THEM IN EVERY CORNER OF EVERY ROOM.

RUN, PAUL RAYMOND, RUN! TRY TO OUTRUN, IF YOU CAN, THE DEATH THAT IS BEING PREPARED FOR YOU! YES, RUN WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH THOUGH YOU KNOW THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR THE MAN WHO BETRAYED THE CULT OF....

VOODOO

ONCE HE WAS THE GREAT RAYMOND, WORLD FAMOUS MAGICIAN, BUT NOW HE WAS JUST PAUL RAYMOND, AN OLD HAS-BEEN, DRINKING HIS LIFE AWAY IN THE SHADOWS OF HAVANA!



IF I COULD ONLY FIND A NEW TRICK, SOMETHING DIFFERENT, I'D SHOW THEM! THE GREAT RAYMOND WOULD BE BACK ON TOP AGAIN! THEY WOULDN'T LAUGH AT ME THEN!
LOOK OUT! THAT CAR!
MY SON! MY SON!
I THANK YOU, MR. RAYMOND! YOU HAVE SAVED MY SON'S LIFE!
YOU KNOW MY NAME! BUT HOW? WE'VE NEVER MET!
ALL THINGS ARE KNOWN TO ME, MR. RAYMOND! YOU HAVE SAVED THE LIFE OF THE VOODOO PRINCE! FOR THIS YOUR REWARD SHALL BE GREAT!
VOODOO PRINCE? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
I AM BALU, KING OF THE FOLLOWERS OF VOODOO! COME WITH ME, MAGICIAN! I SHALL SHOW YOU MAGIC GREATER THAN ANY YOU HAVE KNOWN ... BLACK MAGIC!
BALU LED THE MAGICIAN THROUGH THE LABYRINTH OF HAVANA'S SLUM SECTION, AND PAUL RAYMOND FOLLOWED, HALF-FRIGHTENED, HALF-ANTICIPATING WHAT AWAITED AT THE END OF THE STRANGE JOURNEY!

AT LAST THEY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION, A DESERTED CLEARING ON THE EDGE OF TOWN! THE KING IMMEDIATELY SET A TRIBAL DRUM VIBRATING TO A STRANGE RHYTHM!
THE FOLLOWERS OF VOODOO WILL COME SOON, AND THEN WE SHALL HAVE OUR REVENGE ON THE MAN WHO ALMOST KILLED THE PRINCE!
BOOM BOOM
YOU MUST SWEAR ON YOUR LIFE NEVER TO REVEAL WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE! SHOULD YOU EVER TELL THE SECRETS OF VOODOO, YOU WILL PAY WITH YOUR LIFE!
I SWEAR!
IF NOT FOR THIS MAN WHO STANDS BESIDE ME NOW, OUR PRINCE WOULD BE DEAD THIS NIGHT BENEATH A MURDERER'S WHEELS! WE MUST HAVE VENGEANCE!
YES! YES, REVENGE! THE CAR DRIVER MUST DIE!
I WRAP THIS PAPER WITH THE CAR'S LICENSE NUMBER ON IT AROUND A PIECE OF SORCERER'S ROOT!
M-401
BUT NOW CAN A LICENSE NUMBER TELL YOU WHO THE DRIVER WAS?
QUIET! I THROW THE PAPER AND THE ROOT INTO THE FIRE, AND SOON WE SHALL SEE THE DOG'S FACE!
WITH SWIFT FINGERS, BALU MADE A STATUETTE WITH BLACK WAX OF THE MAN WHOSE TERRIBLE IMAGE WAS FADING AWAY IN THE FIRELIGHT!
LOOK HARD, PAUL RAYMOND, AND SEE HOW GREAT IS VOODOO'S MAGIC! THERE IS THE MAN WHO WOULD KILL OUR PRINCE!
AAAH!
I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
THIS LITTLE WAX DOLL SHALL BE MY REVENGE! MUENECA NEGRE... THE DOLL OF DEATH!

NOW, DIE! DIE, YOU FIEND! THE KNIFE OF DEATH STABS INTO YOUR HEART! DIE!

AS IF THE STICKING OF THE PIN IN THE DOLL'S HEART WERE A SIGNAL, THE FOLLOWERS ROSE AND STARTED LEAVING WITHOUT A WORD!

BALU, WHY ARE THEY ALL LEAVING? IS IT OVER? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

MY REVENGE IS COMPLETE! TOMORROW, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND! BUT REMEMBER, NEVER REVEAL WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN TONIGHT, MY FRIEND, OR YOU WILL PAY WITH YOUR LIFE!

THE NEXT MORNING...

HAVANA NEWS

HEART ATTACK KILLS MILLIONAIRE

LAST NIGHT, JAY WALTERS, PROMINENT MILLIONAIRE DIED OF A SUDDEN HEART ATTACK, HIS FIRST ACCORDING TO HIS WIFE.

BUT NOW! IT COULDN'T BE! BALU! THE DOLL! IT'S FANTASTIC...OR IS IT?

WITH THESE ROOTS I TOOK FROM BALU LAST NIGHT, I'LL BE THE MOST FAMOUS MAGICIAN IN THE WORLD AGAIN! I'LL GO TO MIAMI! THE VOODOOS WOULD NEVER KNOW!

PRESENTLY...

IN JUST A FEW HOURS, MIAMI! AND THEN FAME AND FORTUNE WILL BE MINE AGAIN!

ONCE IN MIAMI, IT TOOK PAUL RAYMOND ONLY A FEW DAYS TO ARRANGE THE BIGGEST NIGHT CLUB OPENING THE CITY HAD EVER SEEN. HE HAD ONLY TO DEMONSTRATE HIS NEW ACT TO BE HIRED BY THE STARTLED OWNER.

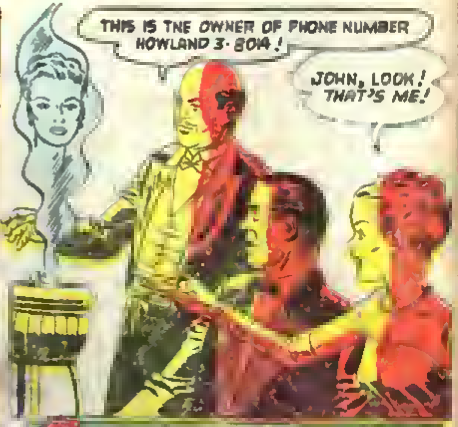
INGO

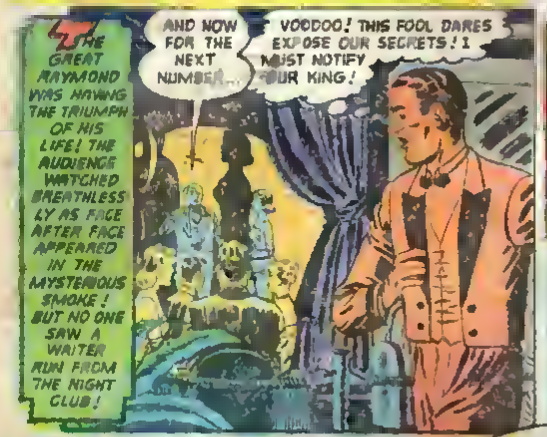
OPENING TONIGHT THE GREAT RAYMOND

I HEAR THAT THIS IS THE MOST SENSATIONAL ACT IN HISTORY!

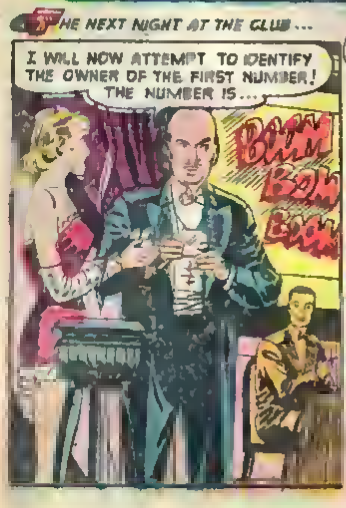
I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD!

THANK YOU FOR PUTTING YOUR PHONE OR LICENSE NUMBERS ON THE SLIPS OF PAPER. MY ASSISTANT PASSED OUT! AND NOW I SHALL ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THE OWNERS OF EACH NUMBER!


THIS IS THE OWNER OF PHONE NUMBER HOWLAND 3-8014!
JOHN, LOOK! THAT'S ME!


THE GREAT RAYMOND WAS HAVING THE TRIUMPH OF HIS LIFE! THE AUDIENCE WATCHED BREATHLESSLY AS FACE AFTER FACE APPEARED IN THE MYSTERIOUS SMOKE! BUT NO ONE SAW A WAITER RUN FROM THE NIGHT CLUB!
AND NOW FOR THE NEXT NUMBER...
VOODOO! THIS FOOL DARES EXPOSE OUR SECRETS! I MUST NOTIFY OUR KING!

THAT NIGHT, THE GREAT RAYMOND SLEPT AS HE HAD NOT SLEPT IN YEARS, HIS DREAMS FILLED WITH GLORY! UNTIL...
BOOM BOOM
DRUMS! VOODOO DRUMS! IT CANNOT BE! IT MUSTN'T BE! HOW COULD THEY KNOW ABOUT ME SO QUICKLY?


THE NEXT NIGHT AT THE CLUB...
I WILL NOW ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THE OWNER OF THE FIRST NUMBER! THE NUMBER IS...
BOOM BOOM BOOM

MR. RAYMOND! GET A DOCTOR, SOMEONE!
AAAEEEH! MY HEAD! MY HEAD!

THE PAIN! IT'S KILLING ME! THEY DID IT!
BOOM BOOM
BETTER TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL! I CAN'T FIND A THING WRONG WITH HIM!

JUST TRY TO REST! I'LL GET YOU SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU SLEEP, AND IN THE MORNING WE'LL TAKE X-RAYS TO FIND OUT WHAT'S WRONG!
YES, GO GET ME SOMETHING TO MAKE ME SLEEP!
BOOM BOOM BOOM
BUT AS SOON AS THE NURSE LEFT HIS ROOM...
BALU HAS MADE A DEATH DOLL OF ME! I MUST GET TO HAVANA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE— BEFORE HE PUTS THE PIN IN MY HEART!
BOOM BOOM BOOM
THE MAGICIAN MOVED WITH DESPERATE HASTE! A PLANE TRIP... AND THEN... HAVANA!
HAVANA AIRPORT
TAXI, SENOR?
BALU! BALU! I MUST GET TO HIM IN TIME!
BOOM BOOM BOOM
PAUL RAYMOND RAN HALF-CRAZED THROUGH THE TWISTING STREETS OF HAVANA, KNOWING THAT AT ANY SECOND THE PAIN MIGHT RIP INTO HIS HEART! AT LAST...
BALU!
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU, MR. RAYMOND!
THE DOLL! YOU'VE MADE ONE OF ME WITH A PIN IN ITS HEAD! GIVE IT TO ME!

THIS WILL AVAIL YOU NOTHING—MAGICIAN!

I CAN STOP THE PAIN IN MY HEAD! AAAAH!

JUST SO YOU CAN DO ME NO MORE HARM!
AAGGH!
BANG! BANG!

NOW TO THE AIRPORT! BACK TO MIAMI!

BOOM BOOM BOM-BOOM BOM
IT'S THE DRUMS! THEY SHOULD HAVE STOPPED!

I MUST GET AWAY! I MUST!
TAP
TAP
SECONDS LATER HE SPOTS A TAXI---

SEÑOR, HELP A POOR OLD...AAAGH!

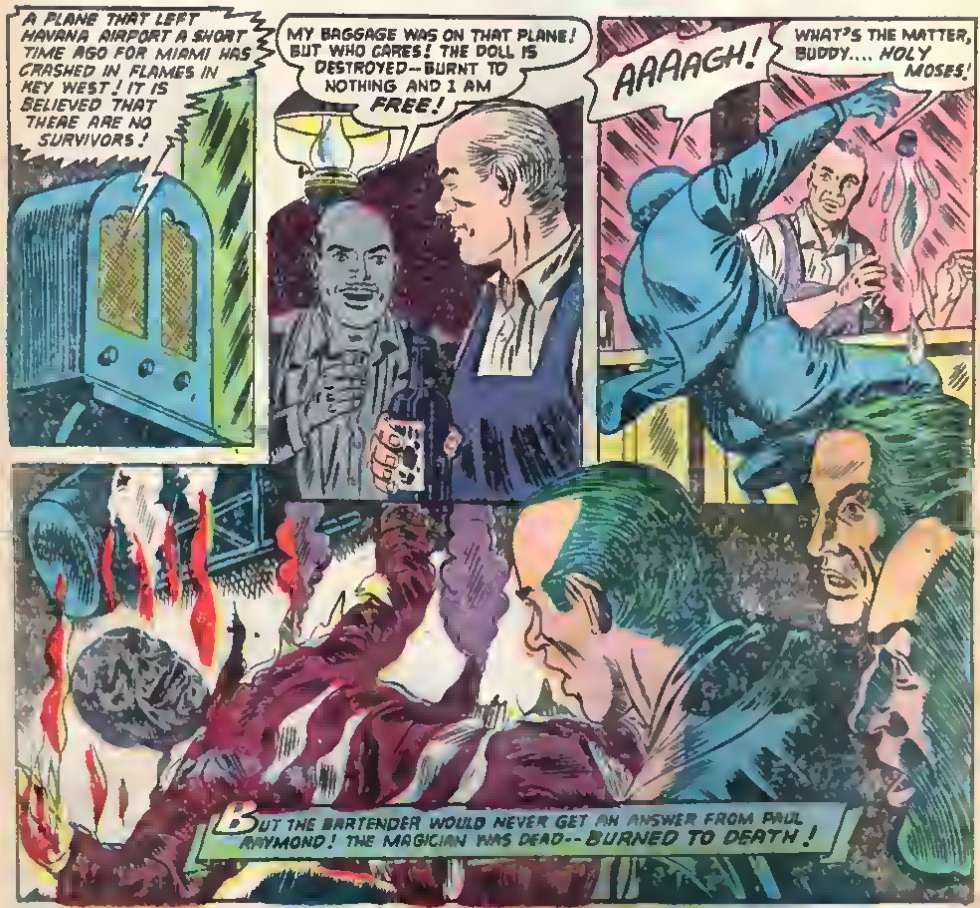
TAKE THIS VALISE TO THE AIRPORT AND SEE THAT IT GETS ON THE NEXT PLANE TO MIAMI! KEEP THE CHANGE!
THANK YOU, SEÑOR!

I'LL HAVE A FEW DRINKS-- AND CATCH THE PLANE!

THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! THE GREAT RAYMOND HAS DONE IT AGAIN!

THE GREAT RAYMOND WAS WILD WITH CELEBRATION! HE DRANK QUICKLY, TASTING THE FRUITS OF TRIUMPH IN EACH GLASS!
ANOTHER DRINK, MY GOOD MAN!
YOU SAID YOU HAD A PLANE TO CATCH AT 11 DO O'CLOCK! YOU'VE MISSED IT!

WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM FOR A SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN!



STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Sec. 233)

Of STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES, published bi-monthly at Greenwich, Conn., for October 1, 1953.

1 The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are Publisher, Fawcett Publications, Inc., Greenwich, Conn. Editor, Roy Aid, Bayside L. I. N. Y. Managing Editor Ralph Daigh, Pelham Manor, N. Y., Business Manager, Gordon Fawcett, Greenwich Conn.

2 The owner is (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.) Fawcett Publications, Inc., Greenwich, Conn. W. M. Fawcett, Jr., Norwalk Conn., Marion Bagg, Kansas City, Mo., Roger Fawcett, Greenwich, Conn., V. D. Fawcett, Greenwich, Conn.; M. B. Fawcett Norwalk, Conn., M. A. Fawcett, Greenwich, Conn., Roscoe Kent Fawcett, Greenwich, Conn.; M. F. Fawcett Greenwich, Conn., M. E. King, Oxnard, Cal., Oberia Leary, Santa Monica, Cal.; V. P. Karr, Santa Barbara, Cal. Mrs. Eva Roberts, Seattle Wash. Fawcett Publications Inc., Greenwich Conn.

3 The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are (None.)

4 Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

5 The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

GORDON FAWCETT,
Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 15th day of September 1953.

(Seal) LILLIAN M. BUSHLEY

(My commission expires April 1, 1955)

NINE, TEN AND DEATH

By Donald Shaw

THIS THING which had happened was weird! It was eerie! It had crept up on Dawson and he could not strike back at it. He paced the floor of his hotel room, clenching his hands, afraid to sleep, and jumping at every sound in the hall. He had seen a ghost at the fight!

But even more than seeing it, the ghost had called to him, "I'll be around to see you later, Champ." Bill Dawson was scared. For a man who had just belted his way to the light heavyweight championship of the world, this did not make sense. He had fought his way up through the ranks against the toughest competition, and fear is something with which champs do not deal. Still the ghost had been there—and soon it might be here in the room!

The thought of it made his powerful, tanned body shiver, and his eyes became two searching, frightened creatures. How could it be? he asked himself. But the thing was true. He had seen a ghost! He had seen Old Joe, his trainer, but everyone knew that Old Joe had been dead for two years! Yet when Dawson had gotten back to the dressing room, the towel was folded over his shoulders the way Old Joe always fixed it! So he must have been there!

Dawson tried to sit down and relax in a chair, but there was no peace from this agonizing mental torture. He wrung his hands, and then went back to pacing again. He remembered the fight—shortly after the opening bell, he had been hit with a right hand punch and been knocked down. An ordinary man would have been finished, but with his great fighting heart and marvelous condition, Dawson had continued.

But it was right then that he had seen the ghost at the ringside! Dazed from the punch, Dawson had started to get up without taking the full count when he saw Old Joe motioning him to take nine.

In his stunned state, this had seemed normal to Dawson. The effects of the punch did not really wear off until the fight was over. Dawson won by a kayo in the ninth round, purely through fighting instinct. When his head had cleared, back at the hotel, the horrible memory that he had taken instructions all through the fight from a ghost came to him! He paid no attention to advice from his corner, but kept watching Joe and following his guidance. Dawson pounded his fists in desperation on the bureau, then slumped down on the bed.

Dawson loved Old Joe because the trainer had been with him from the start. Old Joe had discovered him, trained him, handled him like a son. They had climbed the ladder together.

The memories of Old Joe rubbing him down, and of how they used to talk, made Dawson's skin creep. He felt as though cold, bony hands were reaching out to him from the grave! Old Joe seemed to be here with him right in this room. He could almost hear the hoarse voice of the old trainer, and the voice haunted him! Plagued him!

. . .

The silence of the room suddenly closed in on him like death-gripping, suffocating quicksand! He felt as though Old Joe were near him, getting closer to him every second. The

room seemed full of spooks. shadows from the lamps cast strange and devilish patterns on the walls There were creeping and crawling sounds from under the bed and the closets. Memories of Old Joe pierced his heart and brain and froze his very blood!

In despair. Dawson fell down on the bed and beat the pillows Please plesse. let him alone! The telephone rang suddenly and it was like a clang of doom to Dawson. He caught the scream in his throat. looked at the jangling phone. and then fearfully lifted it in his wet and shaking hand.

"Hello. is this the champion? Is this room 1203?" a voice asked Terror-stricken. Dawson pounced off the bed and with a horrified scream tore the phone from the wall. It was Old Joe's voice! He was coming after him! He had found him! Dewson's head spun. and he rocked in the center of the room, staring at the door, breathlassly and helplessly.

The panic caused him to writhe in agony. and he sunk down on the floor, sobbing the sobs of a beeten and confused man. Why didn't Old Joe understand? Old Joe must have known that he had started the argument himself. Dawson would never have kicked him out of the training camp if he hadn't kept picking and annoying him He loved Old Joe, he always would Why did he want to drive him insane?

Through the tears a sense of relief and sensibility returned to Dawson. All during the fight, right from the knockdown, hadn't the ghost of Old Joe been out there advising him how to fight and beat the champ? If he wanted him to win then, why did he want to haunt him now?

The terror and the panic of the past few houre had whipped Dawson into a limp lump of weakness. Wearily, more tired and beaten then he had been at any time during the fight, he dragged himself to his feet.

Then came the knock at the door! Instantly, the whole fiendish horror surrounded Dawson again. It wasn't just any knock at a door. It was Old Joe's knock! One-one-two. Just the way he used to rap on the door for him to train, or when it was time for him to go down to the ring for a fight. The floor sagged under Dawson, and dizzily he gripped the bed with one hand and the bureau with the other for support, waiting, paralyzed, for the knock again.

Instead, the door opened slowly! Then Old Joe's gnarled hand came in, and then Old Joe stood there. Dawson backed towards the window, shaking his head, terror-stricken. The ghost had found him!

"WHAT'S the matter, champ?" Old Joe spoke kindly. "What are they doing with my boy? C'mere, Bill. Don't be afraid, I can tell you what happened. No, I'm no ghost. I just was away sick, that's all. That's why I started that argument with you. I knew I couldn't keep up with you and I didn't want to be a burden. So I let you kick me out of the training camp and then I had a few old friends circulate the news that I was dead, so you wouldn't be worrying. I've been in the hospital all the while, but tonight when you were fighting for the crown, I just had to get a pass and come to see you. The closest I could get was to throw that towel over your shoulders on the way out. Always told you that you'd be champ, didn't I?"

Dawson threw his arm around Old Joe's shoulders and laughed in relief. He had won his greatest fight. He had conquered the unknown!

THE END

WHAT WERE THESE LETTERS -- THESE MISSIVES THAT KEPT COMING OUT OF NOWHERE LIKE CLOCKWORK? COULD ANYBODY FROM THE GRAVE SEND MAIL TO THE LIVING? IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE, BUT THERE WAS THE UNDENIABLE EVIDENCE OF:

THE LETTERS

THERE WAS A TREMOR IN HER VOICE AND HER HANDS SHOOK UNCONTROLLABLY AS THE YOUNG MAN EMBRACED HER!

OH, JOHN -- HOW I HATE TO SEE YOU GO! MAYBE--MAYBE I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!

OF COURSE YOU WILL, AUNT MARTHA! I'LL BE GONE ONLY THREE MONTHS! IT'S A BUSINESS TRIP I MUST TAKE! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT HERE WITH JOSEPH AND MINERVA!

BUT YOU'RE ALL THE KIN I HAVE LEFT IN THIS WORLD! GOODBYE, MY BOY! DON'T FORGET TO WRITE, YOUR OLD AUNT! THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

DON'T WORRY, AUNTIE -- I'LL BE SURE TO WRITE! YOU JUST WAIT FOR MY LETTERS!

WELL--GOODBYE, JOSEPH! IT'S UP TO YOU AND MINERVA NOW TO TAKE CARE OF MY AUNT UNTIL I GET BACK!

DON'T WORRY, MR. JOHN! WE'VE BEEN WITH YOUR AUNT FOR TWENTY YEARS! WE'LL LOOK OUT FOR HER!

WELL, HE'S GONE! GUESS IT'S UP TO US TO TAKE CARE OF THINGS AROUND HERE FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS!
WE ALWAYS DID TAKE CARE OF THINGS, DIDN'T WE? LONG BEFORE THAT UPSTART CAME HERE TO LIVE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
GOOD HEAVENS! HE TOOK THE BIG CAR INSTEAD OF THE ROADSTER!
WELL, WHAT OF IT?
THE BRAKES ON THAT CAR HE TOOK--THEY'RE SHOT! I DIDN'T HAVE THEM FIXED BECAUSE I THOUGHT HE'D TAKE THE ROADSTER!
HE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO CONTROL THAT CAR GOING DOWNHILL TOWARD TOWN! THE BRAKES WILL NEVER HOLD--ESPECIALLY IN THIS RAIN! I MUST WARN HIM!
WAIT--!
SUPPOSE SOMETHING DID HAPPEN TO HIM? HE'S THE ONLY REMAINING HEIR! WE'D BE ALL THE OLD LADY HAS LEFT! AFTER ALL, WE DIDN'T TELL HIM TO TAKE THAT CAR--!
YOU MEAN--?
THE OLD ONE IS VIRTUALLY ON HER DEATHBED! THERE'S NOBODY ELSE CLOSER TO HER THAN WE ARE! THIS HOUSE--EVERYTHING SHE HAS--CAN BE OURS SOME DAY!
YOU'RE A SMART WOMAN, MINERVA! YOU USE YOUR HEAD!
EVEN AS THE HOUSEKEEPER AND GARDENER WHISPERED ABOUT THEIR FIENDISH SCHEME, JOHN WAS DISCOVERING THE HORRIBLE FACT....
THE BRAKES--THEY WON'T HOLD! I CAN'T STOP THE CAR!

THE CAR BEGAN TO PICK UP MOMENTUM! FASTER--FASTER--IT WENT--AS JOHN VAINLY WRESTLED WITH THE WHEEL! AND THEN AT ONE OF THE HAIRPIN TURNS...
AIEEEEEE!
AAGHHHH!
THERE WAS A LOUD SPLASH AND THEN A DEATHLY SILENCE! BUT SOME TWENTY MINUTES LATER, ANOTHER CAR SLOWLY MADE ITS WAY DOWNHILL AND STOPPED! TWO PAIR OF CURIOUS EYES PEERED INTO THE MURKY WATERS BELOW!
HE WENT OFF THE ROAD, ALL RIGHT! LOOK--SEE PART OF HIS CAR STICKING UP? HE'S A GONER!
WE'LL SAY NOTHING ABOUT THIS--AND WE SAW NOTHING!
NOBODY COULD HAVE SEEN HIM--OR HEARD HIM--SINCE THE HOUSE IS SITUATED WAY UP HERE ON THE CLIFF! AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, HE'S AWAY ON A TRIP! IN DUE TIME, HE'LL BE FOUND!
BUT A FEW DAYS LATER, THE HOUSEKEEPER FOUND HER CHARGE TO BE GETTING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT AS SHE KEPT FUSSING AND COMPLAINING!
I DON'T LIKE IT, MINERVA! NO LETTER FROM JOHN YET! WHAT CAN BE WRONG? I HAVE SUCH DREAMS--!
PERHAPS HE'S BEEN TOO BUSY TO WRITE, MRS. ADAMS!
PSHAW--YOU DON'T KNOW JOHN! WHEN HE SAYS HE'LL DO SOMETHING, HE'LL DO IT! LOOK--ISN'T THAT THE MAILMAN NOW?
HE'LL BRING THE MAIL INTO THE HOUSE--AS HE USUALLY DOES IF THERE'S ANYTHING IMPORTANT!

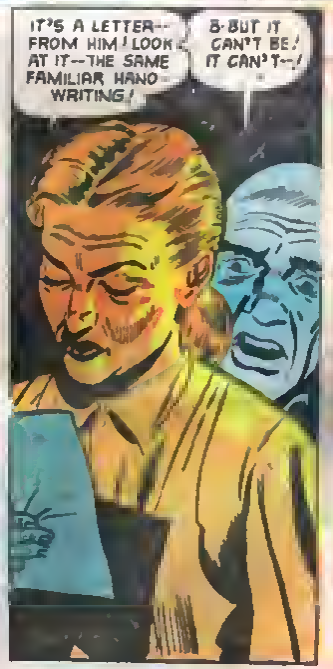
HERE IT IS, MARTHA! THE LETTER YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
IS--IT--FROM JOHN?

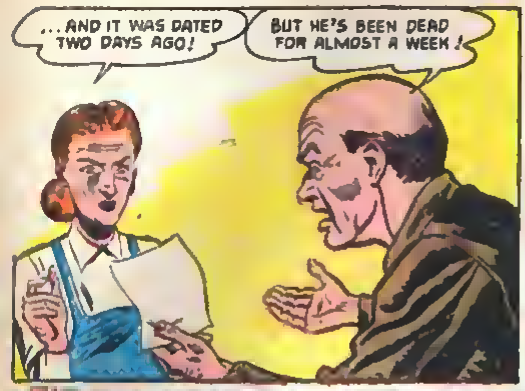
IT SURE IS!
B-BUT IT CAN'T BE!

WHY, OF COURSE IT IS! HE'S WELL--AND HAS BEEN VERY BUSY! OH MY DARLING BOY! I WAS GETTING SO WORRIED!

BUT I JUST KNEW HE'D WRITE! I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER NOW!
MAY--MAY I SEE THE LETTER, MRS. ADAMS?

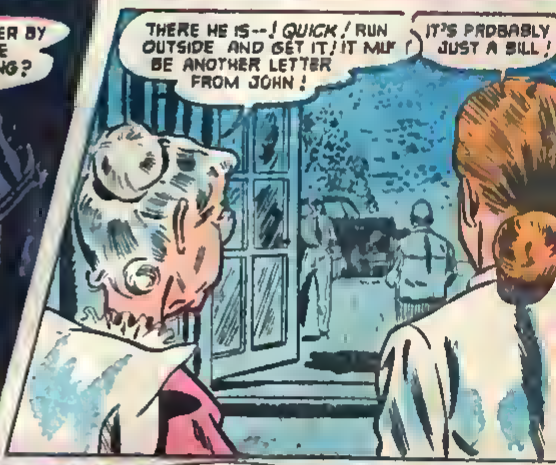
WITH TREMBLING FINGERS, THE HOUSEKEEPER REACHED FOR THE LETTER AND HER EYES SLOWLY FOCUSED ON THE FAMILIAR HANDWRITING!
IT'S TRUE--TRUE! HIS HANDWRITING!
WHAT'S THIS I HEARD ABOUT A LETTER?

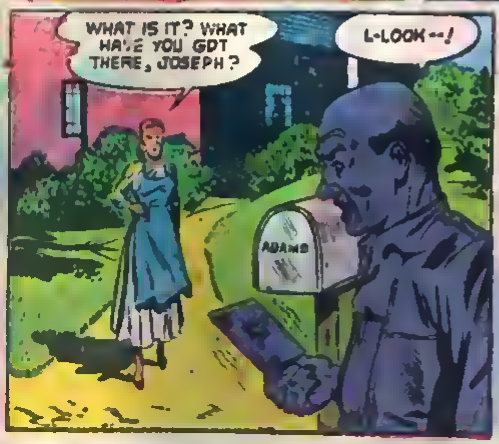

IT'S A LETTER--FROM HIM! LOOK AT IT--THE SAME FAMILIAR HAND-WRITING!
B-BUT IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T--!


...AND IT WAS DATED TWO DAYS AGO!
BUT HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR ALMOST A WEEK!

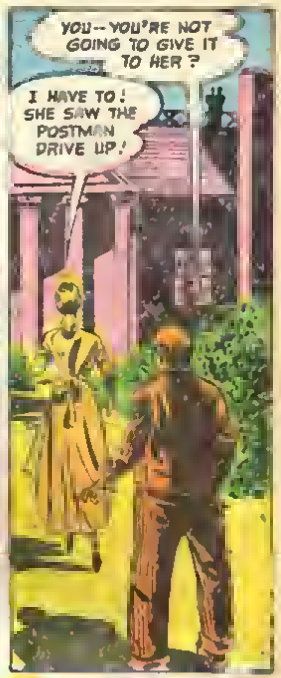
BUT WE KNOW HE'S DEAD! IT CAN'T BE A LETTER FROM A DEAD MAN!
GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, YOU FOOL!

WHEN THE POSTMAN DIDN'T SHOW UP IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, THEY BEGAN TO THINK OF IT AS A NIGHTMARE THAT PASSED!
THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ANOTHER LETTER BY THIS TIME, MINERVA! ARE YOU SURE THE POSTMAN DIDN'T LEAVE ANYTHING?
QUITE SURE, MRS. ADAMS! NOW LET ME FIX YOUR PILLOW!

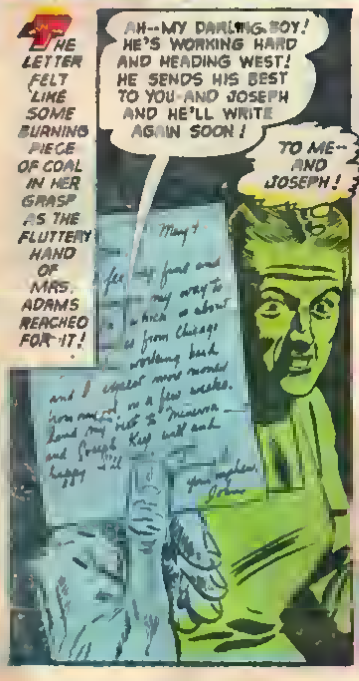

THERE HE IS--! QUICK! RUN OUTSIDE AND GET IT! IT MUST BE ANOTHER LETTER FROM JOHN!
IT'S PROBABLY JUST A BILL!


WHAT IS IT? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE, JOSEPH?
L-LOOK--!
ADAMS

IT--IT'S FROM HIM AGAIN!



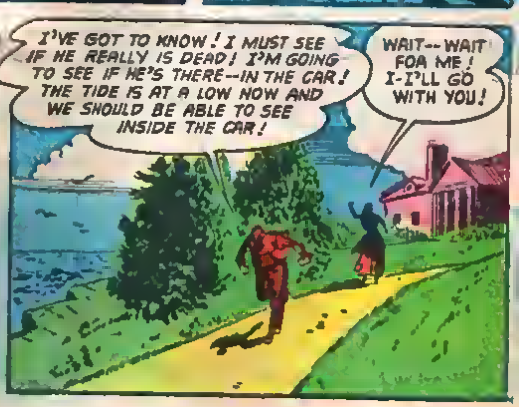
THE LETTER FELT LIKE SOME BURNING PIECE OF COAL IN HER GRASP AS THE FLUTTERY HAND OF MRS. ADAMS REACHED FOR IT!



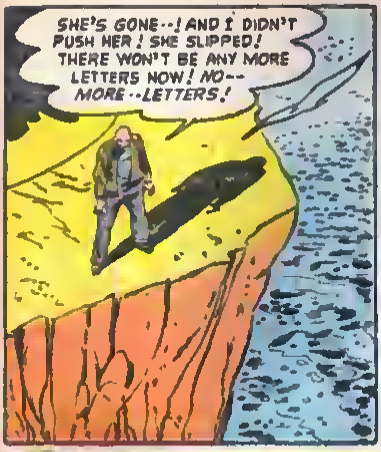
AND WHEN THE GENTLE OLD LADY HAD FALLEN INTO A LIGHT SLUMBER, MINERVA TIPTOED BACK INTO THE ROOM-- HER EYES GLUED ON THE LETTER STILL HELD BY THE KINDLY, TRUSTING OLD SOUL!

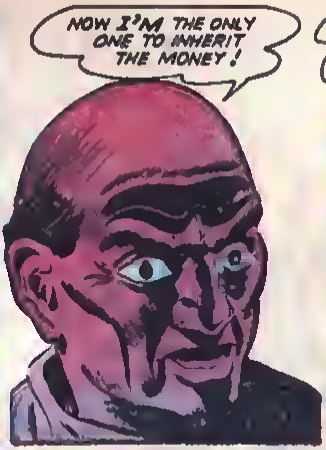
THERE WAS NO PEACE FOR THEM AFTER THAT! FROM DAY TO DAY THEY LIVED AND PRAYED THAT THE POSTMAN WOULD NOT COME! THEY TRIED TO FIND AN ANSWER TO THE LETTERS ARRIVING -- BUT WAS THERE AN ANSWER? THEN, A FEW DAYS LATER.....

USING EVERY BIT OF HER SELF-CONTROL SHE FORCED HERSELF TO LOOK AT THE LETTER, AND ONE GLANCE TOLD HER IT WAS ANOTHER LETTER FROM THE GRAVE!



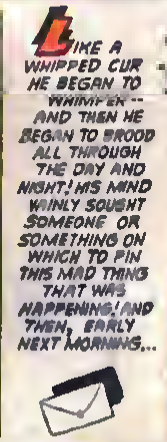
HE'S THERE--IN THAT WATERY GRAVE! AND YET THOSE LETTERS STILL COME! WHY? WHY?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?
AH HA--! BUT NOW I CAN GUESS! YOU SEND THEM!
THERE WAS A MANIACAL GLEAM IN JOSEPH'S EYES AS HE ADVANCED SLOWLY TOWARD THE TERRIFIED HOUSEKEEPER! HIS DAZED MIND CLAMORED FOR AN ANSWER TO THE LETTERS!
NO! NOT I!
YES! BY SENDING THOSE LETTERS YOU HOPED TO DRIVE ME AWAY FROM HERE SO YOU COULD INHERIT ALL THE MONEY FOR YOURSELF! I'M NOT SO STUPID, YOU SEE!
YOU'RE MAD, YOU CRAZY FOOL! I COULDN'T SEND THEM! LET GO OF ME!
THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN SO CALM ABOUT IT ALL! ADMIT IT--! YOU SENT THEM!
FRIGHTENED OUT OF HER WITS, MINERVA VAINLY TRIED TO WRENCH FREE! AS SHE DID--SHE WENT TOO FAR BACK!
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
ADMIT IT!
AIEEEEEE!!


SHE'S GONE--! AND I DIDN'T PUSH HER! SHE SLIPPED! THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE LETTERS NOW! NO-- MORE--LETTERS!


NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE TO INHERIT THE MONEY!

JUST.. ME--! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HAAA! IT'S ALL GOING TO BE MINE!

BUT THE FOLLOWING DAY, SOMETHING DREW HIM TO THE MAILBOX AND HE OPENED IT TO DISCOVER ...
ANOTHER ONE--! ANOTHER LETTER FROM HIM!
ADAMS


LIKE A WHIPPED CUR HE BEGAN TO WHIMPER-- AND THEN HE BEGAN TO BROOD ALL THROUGH THE DAY AND NIGHT! HIS MIND WAINLY SOUGHT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ON WHICH TO PIN THIS MAD THING THAT WAS HAPPENING! AND THEN, EARLY NEXT MORNING...

IF THE OLD LADY WAS DEAD, THE LETTERS WOULD STOP! THERE'D BE NO REASON FOR THE LETTERS! SHE MUST BE SOME KIND OF WITCH IN TOUCH WITH THE DEAD! BUT I CAN STOP IT! I CAN-- STOP IT!

IS THAT YOU, JOSEPH? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHERE'S MINERVA? WH-WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU MUST DIE NOW, MRS. ADAMS! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THE LETTERS! THE-- ONLY--WAY--!

AIEEEEE!
YOU MUST DIE--!

BUT AS HIS HANDS TIGHTENED AROUND THE FRAGILE THROAT, THERE WERE RUNNING FOOTSTEPS AND THE POLICE SURGED INTO THE ROOM!
GOOD HEAVENS! HE TRIED TO KILL HER!
HE'S DEAD--AND THE LETTERS KEPT COMING! I SAW HIM DIE--AND YET HE SENT THE LETTERS!
I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM! THE BRAKES ON HIS CAR--THEY DIDN'T WORK! BUT HE KEPT WRITING--!
I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS, MRS. ADAMS, BUT YOUR NEPHEW HAD A BAD ACCIDENT! HIS CAR WENT OVER THE CLIFF! WE FOUND HIS BODY LOCKED IN HIS CAR UNDER WATER!
WE FOUND THE BODY OF YOUR HOUSEKEEPER DRIFTING OFF SHORE AND THAT LED US TO THE CAR! THAT GARDENER OF YOURS MUST HAVE KILLED HER... AND YOUR NEPHEW!
AND AS FOR THOSE LETTERS, MRS. ADAMS--I MAILED THEM!
YOU SEE, JOHN EXPECTED TO BE CONTINUOUSLY ON THE GO--AND VERY BUSY! SO HE WROTE THOSE LETTERS BEFORE HE LEFT AND ASKED ME TO MAIL THEM PERIODICALLY! BUT I MAILED THE LAST ONE A FEW DAYS AGO! THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE!
NO--NO!. SOB.. HE CAN'T BE DEAD! JOHN WILL WRITE TO ME--! HE WILL! HE'S ALL I HAD IN THE WORLD!
POOR OLD SOUL! SHE JUST CAN'T ACCEPT THE FACT THAT HE'S DEAD, THAT THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE LETTERS!
AND EVEN AS HER PITIFUL SOBS WRACKED HER FRAIL BODY, THE POSTMAN WALKED IN, AND IN HIS HAND HE FELT A FAMILIAR OBJECT.
ANOTHER LETTER FROM JOHN FOR YOU, MRS. ADAMS!
FROM--JOHN?
CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW THAT ONE GOT SO WET! YOU CAN READ IT ALL RIGHT, THOUGH, CAN'T YOU?
YES--YES... SOB... I TOLD YOU JOHN WOULD WRITE TO ME! I KNEW HE WOULD!

HORROR

DEFYING ALL DESCRIPTION!

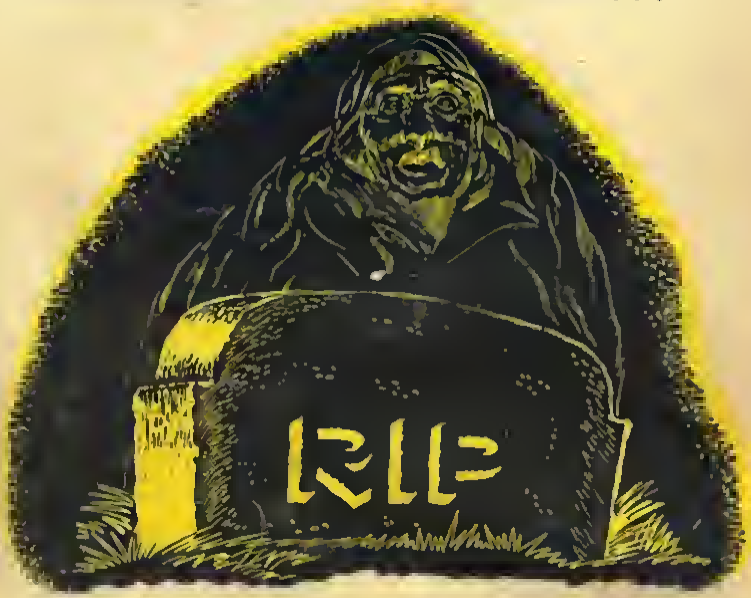
...SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES
IF YOU *DARE*... IN

WORLDS OF FEAR

STORIES OF
WEIRD ADVENTURE

10¢ ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND 10¢

IF THE DEAD COULD BE
FRIGHTENED BACK TO LIFE...



THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

THE WEIRDEST OF ALL THE
SUPERNATURAL COMIC MAGAZINES
WOULD DO IT!

10¢ ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND 10¢